

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace the previously submitted claims appearing in the above-noted application.

1. (Currently amended) A cigarette filter that includes a nonwoven fabric that is made by a process which comprises ~~A method of producing a nonwoven fabric for use in cigarette filters comprising~~ the steps of forming a web of fibers, and optionally other filling components, via the latex bonded airlaid or multibonded airlaid method and coating the web with an aqueous based polymer binder comprising one or more polymer compositions and one or more stabilizing agents, where the stabilizing agent is present in amounts of from 1 to 15 parts per hundred weight monomer based on the monomer content of the polymer composition, and wherein the nonwoven fabric comprises in the range of about 30 to about 2 parts by dry weight of the binder and in the range of about 70 to about 98 parts by dry weight of the fibers and other filling components, and wherein the binder, fibers and filling components are acceptable for use in cigarette filter applications.
2. (Canceled)
3. (Canceled)
4. (Canceled)
5. (Canceled)
6. (Canceled)
7. (Withdrawn) A nonwoven fabric for use in cigarette filters made according to the method of claim 1.
8. (Withdrawn) A polymer binder composition for use in the consolidation of nonwoven fabric webs for application in cigarette filters comprising one or more polymer compositions and one or more high molecular weight protective colloids, wherein the polymers are

polymerized from monomers selected from the group consisting of ethylene, vinyl acetate and vinyl esters of aliphatic carboxylic acids with chain lengths of up to C₁₈.

9. (Withdrawn) The polymer binder composition of claim 8, wherein the one or more high molecular weight protective colloids are selected from the group consisting of polyvinyl alcohol, ethylcellulose, hydroxyethylcellulose, methylcellulose, hydroxymethylcellulose, carboxymethylcellulose, sodium, potassium, and magnesium salts of carboxymethylcellulose, dextrans, gum arabic and mixtures thereof.
10. (Withdrawn) The polymer binder composition of claim 8, wherein the polymer composition is selected from the group consisting of vinyl acetate homopolymers, ethylene vinyl acetate copolymers, copolymers of vinyl acetate with vinyl esters of long-chain saturated aliphatic carboxylic acids with lengths up to C₁₈, vinyl acetate/veova copolymers and mixtures thereof.
11. (Withdrawn) A nonwoven fabric for use in cigarette filters comprising the polymer binder compositions of claim 8.
12. (Canceled)
13. (Canceled)
14. (Canceled)
15. (Canceled)
16. (Canceled)
17. (Canceled)
18. (Canceled)

19. (Canceled)
20. (Previously presented) A cigarette filter that includes a nonwoven web that is bonded with an aqueous based polymer binder which has a solids content that consists essentially of a polymer composition and a protective colloid stabilizing agent.
21. (Previously presented) The cigarette filter according to claim 20, wherein the protective colloid is selected from the group consisting of polyvinyl alcohol, cellulose ethers, and combinations thereof.
22. (Previously presented) The cigarette filter according to claim 20, wherein the protective colloid consists of polyvinyl alcohol.
23. (Previously presented) The cigarette filter according to claim 20, wherein the polymer binder is substantially free of surfactants.